

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1 1. A tool for opening a cable having a length of filament disposed within
2 a sheath, the tool comprising:
3 a proximal portion having a first flange connected with a shaft extending from
4 the flange and adapted for engagement with a powered mechanical rotation device; and
5 a distal portion having a second flange; and
6 a column coupled with one of the proximal and distal portions and detachably
7 engaged with the other of the proximal and distal portions, the column including a cavity
8 adapted to grip the filament and disposed such that the cavity is between the first and second
9 flanges when the column is engaged with the other of the proximal and distal portions.

1 2. The tool recited in claim 1 wherein the column is fixedly coupled with
2 the one of the proximal and distal portions.

1 3. The tool recited in claim 1 wherein:
2 the column comprises a hollow interior; and
3 the cavity comprises a hole extending through a surface of the column to the
4 hollow interior.

1 4. The tool recited in claim 1 wherein cavity comprises a plurality of
2 cavities, each such cavity being adapted to grip the filament.

1 5. The tool recited in claim 1 wherein the powered mechanical rotation
2 device is a hand-held drill.

1 6. The tool recited in claim 1 wherein:
2 the first flange comprises a threaded hole; and
3 the column is threaded at a proximal end for threading into the threaded hole,
4 whereby the column is detachably engaged with the proximal portion and
5 coupled with the distal portion.

1 7. The tool recited in claim 1 wherein:
2 the second flange comprises a threaded hole; and
3 the column is threaded at a distal end for threading into the threaded hole,

4 whereby the column is detachably engaged with the distal portion and coupled
5 with the proximal portion.

1 8. The tool recited in claim 1 wherein the filament comprises a strength
2 member of an optical-fiber cable.

1 9. A method for opening a cable having a length of filament disposed
2 within a sheath, the method comprising:
3 attaching an end of the filament to a tool having a column disposed between
4 two flanges, the column including a cavity adapted to grip the filament;
5 thereafter, rotating the column to pull the filament from the sheath and to
6 spool the filament about the column; and
7 thereafter, separating one of the flanges from the column to release the
8 spooled filament.

1 10. The method recited in claim 9 wherein rotating the column comprises
2 rotating the column with a powered mechanical rotation device engaged with the tool.

1 11. The method recited in claim 10 wherein the powered mechanical
2 rotation device is a hand-held drill.

1 12. The method recited in claim 9 wherein:
2 the tool further has a shaft extending from a first of the flanges; and
3 rotating the column comprises rotating the shaft with a powered mechanical
4 rotating device engaged with the shaft.

1 13. The method recited in claim 12 wherein separating one of the flanges
2 from the column comprises separating the first of the flanges from the column.

1 14. The method recited in claim 12 wherein separating one of the flanges
2 from the column comprises separating a second of the flanges from the column.

1 15. The method recited in claim 9 wherein:
2 the one of the flanges comprises a threaded hole into which a threaded end of
3 the column is screwed; and
4 separating the one of the flanges from the column comprises unscrewing the
5 column relative to the one of the flanges.

1 16. The method recited in claim 9 wherein the filament comprises a
2 strength member of an optical-fiber cable.

1 17. A system for opening a cable having a length of filament disposed
2 within a sheath, the system comprising:
3 means for gripping an end of the filament;
4 means for extracting the filament from within the sheath and for spooling the
5 extracted filament;
6 means for confining the filament to a longitudinal region as the filament is
7 spooled; and
8 means for removing the means for confining to release the spooled filament
9 from the longitudinal region.

1 18. The system recited in claim 17 wherein the means for gripping the end
2 of the filament comprises a cavity in a column about which the filament is spooled.

1 19. The system recited in claim 18 wherein the means for extracting the
2 filament from within the sheath and for spooling the extracted filament comprises means for
3 rotating the column about an axis of the column.

1 20. The system recited in claim 19 wherein the means for confining the
2 filament comprises first and second flanges disposed at positions along the axis, wherein the
3 cavity is disposed between the first and second flanges and wherein at least one of the first
4 and second flanges is removable from the column.